

# The Lion's Share

Volume 10~Issue 9~June & July 2010



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## Petra Receives Accreditation

*Mr. Todd Hicks*

Mr. Valeriano, Mr. Koenen, and I were greeted with some very welcome news on the first morning of the ACCS conference in Durham, North Carolina: the ACCS board approved our application and the visiting committee's recommendation for accredited status!

Petra joins just twenty other schools across the nation, among 229 member schools, to receive this distinction from ACCS.

Students and families who were here this past school year will recall the visit of the accreditation team in mid-April. The visiting accreditation team observed numerous classes during their two-day visit and met with individual teachers, students, and the school board. After their visit, the visiting committee produced a very positive report and recommended to the ACCS board that we be granted accreditation status. The ACCS board's approval

on June 16 completed the process.

The "Final ACCS Accreditation Report" reads, "The quality of and the commitment to classical education occurring in the classrooms of Petra Academy is strongly representative of the high standards that ACCS wants to promote and see emulated by other classical and Christian schools. It is obvious to the accreditation committee that the constituent parents of Petra Academy are blessed with a high-quality education for their children. They are served by a board that has a very strong commitment to the vision of classical and Christian education, and has worked diligently to foster and sustain it."

The board and staff were particularly pleased with the ACCS accreditation as this has long been the accreditation "high-bar" sought by Petra, rather than seeking accreditation through some other organization. ACCS represents an

extremely high standard of what ACCS describes as "a unified and directed approach to classical and Christian learning," looking for clear evidence for the classical methodology in the three stages of the *Trivium* (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the content expected of a rigorous classical and Christian education.

The actual visit was preceded by a couple years of extensive documentation preparation, including Mr. Koenen's several-hundred-page "scope and sequence" of every class taught at Petra. The documentary package also included exemplary student work from grades K to 12 as well as documentation of every facet of the school: mission, academics, administration, finances, emergency procedures, and even the facility itself.

The term of our initial accreditation is two years, so we

Accreditation cont...

can expect another visit in April of 2012. Subsequent terms will be five years between ACCS visits.

All of us can thank God for allowing us to see this milestone and be grateful for the many who helped pave the way for the school to be in this position!

*Holden Sukut, Bryan Meyers,  
Kayla Ervin & Katrina Murphy*



## Class of 2010 Exhorted to Lives of Learning

*Mr. Todd Hicks*

If graduations are always tinged with the bitter-sweet taste of the joy of accomplishment and the sorrow of farewell, this one was particularly so as Petra's three 2010 graduates were blessed with the valediction of the well beloved Mr. Meyers, himself leaving us to accept a new position in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Petra graduates, Kayla Ervin, Katrina Murphy, and Holden Sukut were feted with a traditional graduation service in the Youth Room at Grace Bible Church followed by a reception in the downstairs "fireside room" with many family and friends in attendance, including those coming from out-of-state distances. The Class of 2010 swell the ranks of our graduate alumni to nineteen.

Besides choosing Mr. Meyers as their commencement speaker, the Class of 2010 chose the hymn, "Great is Thy Faithfulness," to embody the expression of their hearts at this milestone in their lives. Musical accompaniment was provided throughout by Anya Poirier on the piano, including the traditional entrance of the graduates to "Pomp and Circumstance." Special music was provided by Class of 2011 schoolmate, Adam Gianforte, performing a violin solo. Class of



*Kayla Ervin, Holden Sukut,  
Katrina Murphy*

2008 alumna, Kimberlee DeGroot, put together a "picture and song" snapshot of the lives of the three graduates. Kayla offered the valedictory address and Holden the salutatory address. In keeping with their hymn of choice, both recounted God's faithfulness through family and teachers who had played such instrumental roles in their lives. Diplomas were presented by Mr. Hicks and the Petra board.

Mr. Meyers addressed the graduates and guests with the "preconditions of learning," reminding them that their "learning doesn't end here. It begins here." Using the text of John 3: 19-20, Mr. Meyers suggested that the "preconditions of learning" were to hate darkness and love the truth, to hate what is evil and to love what is good. In fleshing out these principles, he reminded us of the

uncanny way we have of doing the opposite because of our "bent" and the devouring nature of sin. So in characteristic Mr. Meyers fashion, he pointed us to Christ: "...knowing Christ is the ultimate answer to the question of what we must know before we can know anything else. Only through the gospel do we realize that we know nothing and have gone off track from the beginning and thus need to be reorientated by Someone outside of ourselves. Only through the gospel are sinners reconciled to God, the source and fountain of all knowledge. Only through the gospel do we have abiding confidence in the love of God such that we can courageously engage in the life-long uprooting of sin and falsehood that so easily entangles us. Only through the gospel of Jesus Christ, then, can we begin to know."

Both Kayla and Holden plan to continue their "beginning to know" at MSU, Kayla leaning toward elementary education and Holden toward philosophy. Katrina is enrolled at Trinity Western University, in British Columbia, where she leans toward studies in the humanities.

# Building Update

*Susan Beth Brenner*



The summer of 2010 is a busy one for Petra and the building committee. Headed up by Susan Gianforte, we are moving with the building process at an impressive pace...

Our building plans and a Master Site Plan (allowing for future development of the school as we are ready) are currently in front of the City Planning staff for review. We are attending weekly meetings through July 7th to get feedback

from city staff and answer any questions they might have. At this point that process is going well, and we anticipate a meeting in front of the City Council in mid to late July. We will send an email out when we have a firm date on this, and will appreciate your attendance if possible. As always, your prayers for the process of getting our building plans approved are greatly appreciated.

A special thank you to Chris

Budeski of Madison Engineering, Craig Miller of Living Places Design Studio, and the whole BGW staff for all the work they've put into moving this building process forward. We also thank the parents and staff who put time into reviewing the plans for the building and made suggestions for changes and improvements. Your participation is invaluable! As we move forward there will be more opportunities for participation from our Petra families.



# Development Update

*Susan Beth Brenner*



To keep up with the pace of the building project, we are continuing to move forward with fundraising efforts. We now have beautiful presentation booklets regarding our project and our fundraising goals. These booklets were put together through the generous donation of time and effort by Anne Olson. If you get a chance to see her, please thank her for her beautiful work. Truly, we could not have these booklets without her. If you know of anyone who might be interested in participating in our fundraising efforts, please let us know. We love

all opportunities to share what we are doing here at Petra, and the booklet is a wonderful way to introduce our project.

Our plans for the Soup Cook-off on September 18th are taking shape well. This will be our first public fundraiser for the building, so be sure and mark your calendar for this day of fun and good food. We'll have something for people of all ages. If you or someone you know would like to be a contestant in this event, contact Susan Beth Brenner at the school and we will get you further information.

With the anticipation of moving dirt at the building site in August in preparation for the building foundation, we are planning a groundbreaking event (tentatively July 29th). This will be a simple affair, and we will follow it with a big celebration of both the building progress and our accreditation on Friday, the 10th of September. More information on these events will be coming.

We are hitting the ground running this fall with both the building process and the fundraising efforts. Please keep both of these items in your prayers!

# Petra Staff Benefit from Conference

*-by Mr. Sam Koenen and Mr. Todd Hicks*

Three Petra staff members, Misters Valeriano, Koenen, and Hicks, attended the annual ACCS conference, this year in Durham, North Carolina, June 16-19.

The conference featured plenary speakers Os Guinness, Douglas Wilson, and Matt Whitling. Several workshops were available throughout the days, focusing in administration and the three different stages of the *Trivium*.

Secondary teachers Misters Koenen and Valeriano attended mostly rhetoric and logic workshops, including those on science, the arts, and the humanities. Through various workshops and

conversations with other conference attendees, Mr. Koenen learned a good deal about the importance of music in a classical Christian education. As one of the liberal arts, music has long been described as "number expressed in time and space." It has been praised by educators since Plato and Aristotle as essential for young students because of its ability to shape their souls, giving them a preference and sympathy for order, harmony, rhythm, and beauty. Souls that have been properly "tuned" in this way are then ready to begin their study of the seven liberal arts. Mr. Koenen and Mr. Hicks will be exploring this

aspect of classical education a good deal over the next several months.

Mr. Hicks attended administrative and grammar school workshops, seeking to become better versed in grammar school pedagogy.

On Thursday evening, we were treated to a splendid North Carolina barbecue, hosted by ACCS accredited school, the Cary School. The meal was served in an enormous tent on their football field followed by a tour of their beautiful school facility. Perhaps the most memorable feature of their school was the elegantly framed works of art that students had produced as copies of great works of art.

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## Announcements

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**School Shopping:** Links to school uniform vendors can be found under the "Admissions" tab of our website. Both vendors have Petra's uniform selection, but they also push extra items that are not required at Petra, even if they appear as "Petra socks, etc." on the vendor websites. If in doubt, check the uniform requirements in the *Parent-Student Handbook*. Please remember that to maintain uniformity, we do ask that you use Hall Closet or French Toast for uniform items. Note as well that our board has approved use of white and brown tennis shoes as well as black as an alternative to dress shoes.

**Class Supply Lists** will be emailed next week.

**Summer Calendar:**  
July 29, 8:30-10:00 am: Ground-breaking @ building site next to Bronkon fields  
August 10, 3:45 pm: Board Meeting  
September 2, 7 pm: Parent-Teacher Back to School Night  
September 7: First day of school year 2010-2011

**Thanks from ACCS Visiting Committee** for the hospitality shown in so many ways throughout their visit. Special mention is made in their report of all the parents who helped make their visit so pleasant. Thank-you!

**Keep Petra in your summer prayers!** Much is happening this summer as we prepare for another school year and beginning construction on our new school facility. "Unless the Lord build the house..."



## A Reminder...

There is a collection of "gently worn" uniforms at the school which can be purchased at a discount.

A variety of sizes are available!

Please check at the front desk for location and prices.

(Please call during the summer to verify that someone will be in the building to let you in).

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# June~July 2010

